Current Class: Current Handling: n/a

Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486



Page: 1

Channel: n/a

Case Number: S20000044

PAGE 01

BUENOS 04486 01 OF 03 082118Z

ACTION HA-08

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044) U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS Margaret P. Grafeld, Director ( U Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny Exemption(s):\_ Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full ( ) Classify as \_ ( ) Extend as \_ ( ) Downgrade to \_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Declassify on \_\_\_\_\_ Reason \_

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SECTION 01 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 04486

CINCSO FOR INTAFF

CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

DECL: OADR E.O. 12356: TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, AR

SUBJECT: TRIALS OF THE MILITARY IN ARGENTINA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4306

SUMMARY: TRIALS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL (MOSTLY RETIRED) CONTINUE IN MILITARY AND CIVIL COURTS. IN VARIOUS PHASES, AND FOR VARIOUS CHARGES RANGING FROM MILITARY INCOMPETENCE TO HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. AT LEAST TEN OFFICERS, INCLUDING ALL THREE MEMBERS OF



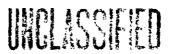
PAGE 02

01 OF 03 BUENOS 04486 082118Z

EX-PRESIDENT GALTIERI'S WARTIME JUNTA, ARE BEING TRIED

Current Class:





Current Class: Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486

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Page: 2

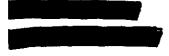
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Case Number: S200000044

BY THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR PART IN THE FALKLANDS WAR. THE TRIALS ARE TAKING SO LONG, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT ALFONSIN AND HUMAN-RIGHTS LEADERS HAVE PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE SLOW PACE. THE POSSIBILITY OF ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS BEING TRIED IN CIVIL COURTS IS A SOURCE OF CONTINUING CONCERN IN MILITARY RANKS AND IS A DELICATE ISSUE IN GOA-MILITARY RELATIONS. THE DEFENSE MINISTER HAS CASHIERED THE FIRST ARMY GENERAL TO BE STRIPPED OF HIS UNIFORM SINCE FORMER PRESIDENT JUAN PERON, FOR NOT APPEARING IN COURT. END SUMMARY.

### 2. (U) THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES

THERE ARE NOW AT LEAST TEN OFFICERS (MOSTLY RETIRED) "AT THE DISPOSAL OF" THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR THEIR PART IN THE FALKLANDS/MALVINAS WAR, INCLUDING ALL THREE MEMBERS OF EX-PRESIDENT LEOPOLDO GALTIERI'S WARTIME JUNTA. "AT THE DISPOSAL OF" IS AN ARGENTINE TERM SIMILAR IN MEANING TO OUR "INDICTMENT." AFTER THE RATTENBACH REPORT ON THE WAR WAS ISSUED IN 1983, THE SUPREME COUNCIL BEGAN INVESTIGATING THE CHARGES MADE IN THAT REPORT AGAINST VARIOUS OFFICERS, SOME OF WHOM ARE TECHNICALLY LIABLE FOR THE DEATH PENALTY IF FOUND GUILTY. HUMAN-RIGHTS LEADERS CLAIM THE SUPREME COUNCIL HAS SHOWN FAR MORE INTEREST IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC WAR THAN IN HUMAN-RIGHTS CASES, AND ON MAY 23 DEFENSE MINISTER RAUL BORRAS SUBMITTED TO PRESIDENT RAUL ALFONSIN A DRAFT DECREE AUTHORIZING THE SUPREME COUNCIL TO APPOINT MILITARY JUDGES TO AID IT IN HEARING HUMAN-RIGHTS-VIOLATIONS CASES AGAINST MILITARY PERSONNEL. THE GOA ALSO

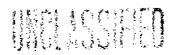


PAGE 03

BUENOS 04486 01 OF 03 082118Z

REPORTEDLY BELIEVES THAT THE NUMBER OF HUMAN-RIGHTS CASES THAT WILL RESULT FROM THE INVESTIGATIONS BY THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PERSONS WILL BE FAR TOO MANY FOR ANY SINGLE COURT TO HANDLE. ON MAY 29, FORMER PRESIDENT REYNALDO BIGNONE, THE RETIRED ARMY MAJOR GENERAL WHO SUCCEEDED GALTIERI IN 1982 AND LED THE COUNTRY TO THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1983, WAS ALSO PLACED "AT THE DISPOSAL OF" THE SUPREME COUNCIL, WHICH IS INVESTIGATING HIS INVOLVEMENT IN A

Current Class:



Current Class:
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486

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Page: 3

Channel: n/a

Case Number: S200000044

CASE INVOLVING THE ABDUCTION OF THREE CONSCRIPTS WHO LATER TURNED UP ALIVE. ON JUNE 7, ALFONSIN WAS QUOTED IN ARGENTINE NEWSPAPERS AS HAVING TOLD SPANISH WEEKLY "CAMBIO 16" IN AN INTERVIEW, "I DO NOT LIKE THE SLOWNESS OF MILITARY JUSTICE, BUT WE HAVE TO PROTECT THE RULE OF LAW."

# 3. COURT JURISDICTION DISPUTE

POTENTIALLY, THE MOST EXPLOSIVE HUMAN-RIGHTS ISSUE PENDING IS THAT INVOLVING CIVIL VERSUS MILITARY-COURT JURISDICTION IN DISAPPEARANCE CASES. THE AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE PASSED BY CONGRESS IN EARLY 1984 PROVIDED FOR MILITARY TRIALS OF ALL MILITARY AND SECURITY PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN CRIMES RELATED TO SUPPRESSION OF SUBVERSION PRIOR TO MID-1982, SUBJECT TO FINAL APPEAL IN FEDERAL APPELLATE COURTS. SEVERAL JUDGES DECLARED THAT THE AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL OR NOT APPLICABLE IN THE CASE OF DISAPPEARANCES BECAUSE, THEY ARGUE, THE CRIME OF DISAPPEARANCE CONTINUES FOR AS LONG AS THE PERSON DOES NOT REAPPEAR, LIKE KIDNAPPING. THUS, THE ARGUMENT GOES, CIVIL COURTS HAVE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OVER SUCH CRIMES. ALTHOUGH THE



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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04486 02 OF 03 082119Z ACTION HA-08

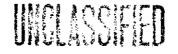
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Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486

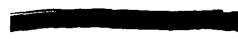


Page: 4

Channel: n/a

Case Number: S20000044

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SECTION 02 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 04486

CINCSO FOR INTAFF

CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

E.Ö. 12356: DECL:OADR TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, AR

SUBJECT: TRIALS OF THE MILITARY IN ARGENTINA

SUPREME COURT IS EXPECTED EVENTUALLY TO RULE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FAVOR, I.E., IN SUPPORT OF MILITARY-COURT JURISDICTION, THE OUTCOME IS FAR FROM CERTAIN. MOREOVER, EVENTUAL APPEALS TO CIVIL COURTS OF MANY DISAPPEARANCE OR DTHER HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATIONS CASES, WHICH MAY INVOLVE FESTIMONY BY ACTIVE-DUTY OFFICERS, CAN RESULT IN SITUATIONS THAT ARE VERY DELICATE FOR GOVERNMENT-ARMED

PAGE 02

BUENOS 04486 02 OF 03 082119Z

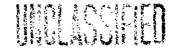
FORCES RELATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, MILITARY JUSTICE CAN UNFOLD VERY SLOWLY. THUS, A SUPREME COURT DECISION IN FAVOR OF MILITARY-COURT JURISDICTION MAY ENSURE THAT SUCH CASES DO NOT ARRIVE IN CIVIL APPELLATE COURTS FOR CEARS.

## (U) CIVIL COURTS

IN ADDITION TO THE CASES BEING HEARD BY THE ARMED FORCES SUPREME COUNCIL, THERE ARE MANY CASES BEING HEARD BY SIVILIAN JUDGES IN CIVIL COURTS, IN WHICH FORMER MILITARY PERSONNEL EITHER ARE BEING TRIED OR HAVE APPEARED TO SESTIFY. THOSE WHO HAVE APPEARED INCLUDE BIGNONE, FORMER FUNTA MEMBER AND RETIRED NAVY ADMIRAL RUBEN FRANCO, AND PORMER INTERIOR MINISTER AND RETIRED ARMY MAJOR GENERAL LEANO HARGUINDEGUY. FORMER BUENOS AIRES MAYOR RETIRED AIR FORCE BRIGADIER GENERAL OSVALDO CACCIATORE WAS PUT INDER PREVENTIVE ARREST ON MAY 23 BY A CIVILIAN JUDGE, THO ALSO POSTED A U.S. \$77-MILLION ATTACHMENT ON SACCIATORE'S ASSETS AFTER FINDING HIM GUILTY PRIMA

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Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486



Page: 5

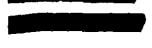
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Case Number: S200000044

FACIE OF FRAUDULENT ADMINISTRATION WHILE SERVING AS MAYOR.

5. (U) SENATE VERY SLOW IN APPROVING NEW JUDGES

YET ANOTHER PROBLEM THAT IS SLOWING DOWN THE CIVIL JUDICIAL PROCESS IS THE SENATE'S SNAIL-LIKE PACE IN APPROVING THE NEW JUDGES WHOSE NAMES HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THE APPROVAL PROCESS HAS BEEN SO SLOW THAT IN MAY THE SUPREME COURT SENT A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE EXPRESSING ITS CONCERN ABOUT THE DELAYS. ON JUNE 6, THE SENATE RETURNED THE MESSAGE TO THE SUPREME COURT



PAGE 03

BUENOS 04486 02 OF 03 082119Z

SINCE THE SENATE CONSIDERED THE COURT'S LANGUAGE "UNACCEPTABLE."

COMMENT: THE CRUX OF THIS PROBLEM IS THE SENATE APPROVALS COMMITTEE IS CONTROLLED BY THE PERONISTS (5-4). MOREOVER, THAT COMMITTEE'S VICE CHAIRMAN IS JICENTE SAADI, A LEFT-WING PERONIST WHO IS USING HIS POSITION TO SEEK THE APPOINTMENT OF AS MANY PERONIST JUDGES AND AMBASSADORS AS POSSIBLE. ONE OF HIS BARGAINING TACTICS HAS BEEN TO HOLD UP APPROVAL OF JON-PERONIST JUDGES AND AMBASSADORS IN ORDER TO GET JHAT HE WANTS. OBSERVERS COMMENT, WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, THAT THE RADICALS MADE A BIG MISTAKE IN LETTING THE PERONISTS HAVE CONTROL OF THIS KEY COMMITTEE AND ARE NOW PAYING THE PRICE. END COMMENT.

## '. (U) MILITARY REBELLION

IN MAY 24, FEDERAL PROSECUTOR ALBERTO PIOTTI UPHELD IVIL JURISDICTION OVER THE REBELLION CASE INVOLVING THE THREE MILITARY COMMANDERS WHO OVERTHREW THE GOVERNMENT OF FORMER PRESIDENT MARIA ESTELA MARTINEZ DE PERON IN MARCH 1976. THE DEFENSE LAWYERS OF RETIRED ARMY LT. SENERAL JORGE VIDELA, RETIRED NAVY ADMIRAL EMILIO MASSERA, ND RETIRED AIR FORCE BRIGADIER GENERAL ORLANDO AGOSTI AD ASKED THAT THE CASE BE TRANSFERRED TO MILITARY JURISFICTION. PIOTTI'S DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE APPEALED TO THE SUPREME COURT.

urrent Class:

Current Class:
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486



Page: 6

Channel: n/a

Case Number: S20000044

#### 8. (U) SUAREZ MASON CASHIERED

FORMER FIRST ARMY CORPS COMMANDER RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL



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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04486 03 OF 03 082119Z ACTION HA-08

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 IO-15 NSC-01 ARA-00 NSAE-00 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 OMB-01 RP-10 ACDA-12 USIE-00 SP-02 SR-06 SNP-01 PRS-01 SLPD-01 /084 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
FO SECSTATE WASHDC 1986
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MEMBASSY MADRID

SECTION 03 OF 03 BUENOS AIRES 04486

INCSO FOR INTAFF

INCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

1.0. 12356: DECL:OADR 'AGS: SHUM, PGOV, AR

HUBJECT: TRIALS OF THE MILITARY IN ARGENTINA

CARLOS GUILLERMO SUAREZ MASON WAS CASHIERED IN EARLY MAY BY DEFENSE MINISTER BORRAS FOR FAILING TO APPEAR IN SIVIL AND MILITARY COURTS TO TESTIFY ON CHARGES OF TUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. SUAREZ MASON HAD ALLEGEDLY UPERVISED CLANDESTINE DETENTION CENTERS DURING THE SO-

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Current Class: Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1984BUENOS04486

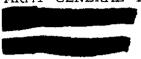


Page: 7

Channel: n/a

Case Number: S200000044

CALLED "DIRTY WAR" AGAINST SUBVERSION. HE IS THE FIRST ARMY GENERAL TO BE STRIPPED OF HIS UNIFORM SINCE FORMER



PAGE 02

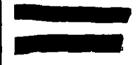
BUENOS 04486 03 OF 03 082119Z

PRESIDENT JUAN PERON. (THERE IS INFORMED SPECULATION THAT SUAREZ MASON HAS LEFT ARGENTINA AND MAY BE IN THE UNITED STATES.)

9. (U) MRS. PERON TO APPEAR IN COURT?

RETIRED ARMY MAJOR GENERAL OSIRIS VILLEGAS, DEFENSE ATTORNEY FOR RETIRED ARMY MAJOR GENERAL RAMON CAMPS, FORMER CHIEF OF THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE, HAS ASKED THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES TO CALL UPON MRS. PERON TO GIVE TESTIMONY ABOUT HER ORDERS THAT BEGAN THE MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST TERRORISTS, LEFTISTS, AND ANYONE THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLICES. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE AIM OF VILLEGAS' REQUEST IS TO PROVE THAT THE ARMED FORCES AND GENERAL CAMPS WERE SIMPLY OBEYING THE EXPRESS ORDERS OF A CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT AND, THEREFORE, SHOULD NOT BE BLAMED FOR CARRYING OUT THOSE ORDERS.

- 10. COMMENT: MRS. PERON LIVES IN SPAIN AND RARELY VISITS ARGENTINA. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PREFER THAT SHE NOT BE REQUIRED TO APPEAR IN COURT AND THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT SHE WILL HAVE TO.
- L1. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, MOST HUMAN-RIGHTS
  LEADERS BELIEVE THE TRIALS OF THE MILITARY ARE TAKING
  TOO LONG AND NOT ENOUGH MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE BEING
  ROUGHT TO TRIAL. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT A LARGE
  TAJORITY OF THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC RECOGNIZES THE JUDICIAL
  PROCESSING OF THESE CASES WILL TAKE TIME AND THE
  ALFONSIN ADMINISTRATION IS MAKING A SINCERE EFFORT TO
  SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE. ORTIZ



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BUENOS 04486 03 OF 03 082119Z

urrent Class:

Page: 7

1